

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A music distribution method comprising:

registering a music reproduction apparatus specified by a listener who pays a fixed membership fee;

receiving by a server a request to distribute music information from ~~[[a]]~~said music reproduction apparatus through a communication medium;

generating by said server a distribution file in which said music information requested and information concerning settings and conditions required for transmitting information from said music reproduction apparatus to said server are integrated;

distributing by said server said distribution file to said music reproduction apparatus through said communication medium;

receiving by said server through said communication medium appreciation records including a number of times of reproduction with attribution of said music information reproduced by said music reproduction apparatus; and

~~identifying a copyright holder to whom a copyright fee should be paid based on said music information reproduced by said music reproduction apparatus, and paying said copyright fee~~

distributing a payment to a copyright holder who holds a copyright of said music information, in accordance with the appreciation records, the payment being drawn from the membership fee paid by the listener.

Claim 2 (Cancelled).

Claim 3 (Original): The music distribution method according to claim 1, wherein said communication medium is the Internet.

Claim 4 (Original): The music distribution method according to claim 3, wherein said information concerning said settings and conditions includes an Internet IP address required for reporting said number of times of reproduction of said music information from said music reproduction apparatus to said server.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): The music reproduction method according to claim 1, wherein said server receives the appreciation records including said number of times of reproduction of said music information at ~~a frequency~~ regular intervals.

Claim 6 (Withdrawn): A music distribution method comprising:
requesting by a music reproduction apparatus to a server distribution of music information through a communication medium;

receiving by said music reproduction apparatus from said server through said communication medium a distribution file in which said music information requested and information concerning settings and conditions required for transmitting information from said music reproduction apparatus to said server are integrated;

reproducing by said music reproduction apparatus said music information in said distribution file;

recording by said music reproduction apparatus a number of times of reproduction of said music information reproduced; and

transmitting by said music reproduction apparatus said number of times of reproduction of said music information to said server through said communication medium.

Claim 7 (Withdrawn): The music distribution method according to claim 6, further comprising receiving by said music reproduction apparatus a music-listening fee payment request according to said number of times of reproduction of said music information, which is transmitted from said server through said communication medium.

Claim 8 (Withdrawn): The music distribution method according to claim 6, wherein said communication medium is the Internet.

Claim 9 (Withdrawn): The music distribution method according to claim 8, wherein said information concerning settings and conditions includes an Internet IP address required for reporting said number of times of reproduction of said music information from said music reproduction apparatus to said server.

Claim 10 (Withdrawn): The music distribution method according to claim 6, wherein said music reproduction apparatus transmits said number of times of reproduction of said music information at a given frequency.

Claim 11 (Withdrawn): A music distribution method comprising:
requesting a server to distribute music information from a music reproduction apparatus through a communication medium;

generating by said server a distribution file in which said music information requested, advertisement information and information concerning settings and conditions required for transmitting information from said music reproduction apparatus to said server are integrated;

distributing by said server said distribution file to said music reproduction apparatus through said communication medium; and

receiving by said server through said communication medium a number of times of reproduction of said music information and a number of times of reproduction of said advertisement information reproduced by said music reproduction apparatus.

Claim 12 (Withdrawn): The music distribution method according to claim 11, further comprising:

requesting by said server to said music reproduction apparatus through said communication medium payment of a music-listening fee in accordance with said number of times of reproduction of said music information; and

requesting by said server to an advertiser through said communication medium payment of an advertisement fee in accordance with a number of times of reproduction of said advertisement information.

Claim 13 (Withdrawn): The music distribution method according to claim 11, wherein said communication medium is the Internet.

Claim 14 (Withdrawn): The music distribution method according to claim 13, wherein said information concerning settings and conditions includes an Internet IP address required for reporting said number of times of reproduction of said music information and said number of times of reproduction of said advertisement information from said music reproduction apparatus to said server.

Claim 15 (Withdrawn): The music distribution method according to claim 11, wherein said server receives said number of times of reproduction of said music information and said number of times of reproduction of said advertisement information at a given frequency.

Claim 16 (Withdrawn): The music distribution method according to claim 11, wherein said distribution file has a header information portion and a main body information portion arranged under said header information portion, and a structure in which said information concerning settings and conditions and said advertisement information are recorded in said header information portion and said music information is recorded in said main body information portion.

Claim 17 (Withdrawn): The music distribution method according to claim 11, wherein said distribution file has a header information portion and a main body information portion arranged under said header information portion, and a structure in which said music information is recorded in said main body information portion and said information concerning settings and conditions and said advertisement information are included in said music information.

Claim 18 (Withdrawn): The music distribution method according to claim 11, wherein said music information and said advertisement information have relevancy, and said music information and said advertisement information are selected in such a manner that the population of listener who prefer songs according to said music information matches with the population of audiences to which advertisement and general publicity according to said advertisement information should be carried out.

Claim 19 (Withdrawn): The music distribution method according to claim 11, wherein said music information and said advertisement information do not have relevancy, and said advertisement information is selected in such a manner that a given advertisement is reproduced with a predetermined timing and at a predetermined time in favor.

Claim 20 (Withdrawn): The music distribution method according to claim 11, wherein said advertisement information has a plurality of sets of information corresponding to respective output modes in such a manner that said music reproduction apparatus can select at least any one of a banner advertisement, a character output and an audio output in accordance with an output mode thereof.

Claim 21 (Withdrawn): A music distribution method comprising:
requesting by a music reproduction apparatus to a server distribution of music information through a communication medium;
receiving by said music reproduction apparatus from said server through said communication medium a distribution file in which said music information requested, advertisement information and information concerning settings and conditions required for transmitting information from said music reproduction apparatus to said server are integrated;
reproducing by said music reproduction apparatus said advertisement information with reproduction of said music information;
recording by said music reproduction apparatus a number of times of reproduction of said music information reproduced and a number of times of reproduction of said advertisement information; and

transmitting by said music reproduction apparatus to said server through said communication medium said number of times of reproduction of said music information and said number of times of reproduction of said advertisement information.

Claim 22 (Withdrawn): The music distribution method according to claim 21, further comprising receiving by said music reproduction apparatus a music-listening fee payment request according to said number of times of reproduction of said music information which is transmitted from said server through said communication medium.

Claim 23 (Withdrawn): The music distribution method according to claim 21, wherein said communication medium is the Internet.

Claim 24 (Withdrawn): The music distribution method according claim 23, wherein said information concerning settings and conditions includes an Internet IP address required for transmitting said number of times of reproduction of said music information and said number of times of reproduction of said advertisement information from said music reproduction apparatus to said server.

Claim 25 (Withdrawn): The music distribution method according to claim 21, wherein said music reproduction apparatus transmits said number of times of reproduction of said music information and said number of times of reproduction of said advertisement information at a given frequency.

Claim 26 (Withdrawn): The music distribution method according to claim 21, wherein said music reproduction apparatus has a transmission/reception device and a portable

reproduction device, said transmission/reception device receiving said distribution file from said server and transmitting said distribution file to said portable reproduction device, said portable reproduction device reproducing said music information and said advertisement information in said distribution file and transmitting said number of times of reproduction of said music information and said number of times of reproduction of said advertisement information to said transmission/reception device, said transmission/reception device transmitting said number of times of reproduction of said music information and said number of times of reproduction of said advertisement information received to said server.

Claim 27 (Withdrawn): The music distribution method according to claim 21, wherein said music reproduction apparatus has a transmission/reception device and a portable reproduction device, said transmission/reception device receiving said distribution file from said server and transmitting said distribution file to said portable reproduction device, said portable reproduction device keeping said distribution file therein for a given period of time and then transmitting it to said transmission/reception device, said transmission/reception device calculating estimated values for numbers of times of reproduction of said music information and said advertisement information based on a keeping period in said portable reproduction device when said distribution file is returned from said portable reproduction device and transmitting the obtained values to said server.

Claim 28 (Withdrawn): The music distribution method according to claim 21, wherein said distribution file has a header information portion and a main body information portion arranged under said header information portion, and a structure in which said information concerning settings and conditions and said advertisement information are

recorded in said header information portion and said music information is recorded in said main body information portion.

Claim 29 (Withdrawn): The music distribution method according to claim 28, wherein said music information recorded in said main body information portion includes specific information which can specify said advertisement information, and said music reproduction apparatus is allowed to reproduce said music information when said advertisement information in said header information portion coincides with said specific information included in said music information in said main body information portion.

Claim 30 (Withdrawn): The music distribution method according to claim 21, wherein said distribution file has a header information portion and a main body information portion arranged under said header information portion, and has a structure in which said music information is recorded in said main body information portion and information concerning settings and conditions and said advertisement information are included in said music information.

Claim 31 (Withdrawn): The music distribution method according to claim 21, wherein said music information and said advertisement information have relevancy, and said music information and said advertisement information are selected in such a manner that the population of listeners who prefer songs according to said music information matches with the population of audiences to which advertisement and general publicity should be carried out according to said advertisement information.

Claim 32 (Withdrawn): The music distribution method according to claim 21, wherein said music information and said advertisement information have no relevancy, and said advertisement information is selected in such a manner that a given advertisement is reproduced with a predetermined timing and at a given time in favor.

Claim 33 (Withdrawn): The music distribution method according to claim 21, wherein said advertisement information has a plurality of sets of information corresponding to each output mode in such a manner that said music reproduction apparatus can select at least any one of a banner advertisement, a character output and an audio output in accordance with its output mode.

Claim 34 (Withdrawn): The music distribution method according to claim 26, wherein said advertisement information has a plurality of sets of information corresponding to each output mode in such a manner that said portable reproduction device can select at least any one of a banner advertisement, a character output and an audio output in accordance with its output mode.

Claim 35 (Withdrawn): The music distribution method according to claim 21, wherein said advertisement information is reproduced during reproduction of said music information.

Claim 36 (Withdrawn): The music distribution method according to claim 21, wherein said advertisement information is reproduced before or after reproduction of said music information.

Claim 37 (Withdrawn): A music distribution method comprising:

requesting by a music reproduction apparatus to a server distribution of music information through a communication medium;

receiving by said music reproduction apparatus said music information requested from said server through said communication medium;

receiving by said music reproduction apparatus information concerning settings and conditions and a plurality of sets of advertisement information from said server through said communication medium;

selecting by said music reproduction apparatus any advertisement information to be reproduced from a plurality of sets of said advertisement information when reproducing said music information;

reproducing by said music reproduction apparatus said selected advertisement information with reproduction of said music information;

recording by said music reproduction apparatus a number of times of reproduction of said music information reproduced and a number of times of reproduction of said advertisement information; and

transmitting by said music reproduction apparatus said number of times of reproduction of said music information and said number of times of reproduction of said advertisement information to said server through said communication medium.

Claim 38 (Withdrawn): The music distribution method according to claim 37, further comprising receiving by said music reproduction apparatus a music-listening fee payment request according to said number of times of reproduction of said music information, which is transmitted from said server through said communication medium.

Claim 39 (Withdrawn): The music distribution method according to claim 37, wherein said communication medium is the Internet.

Claim 40 (Withdrawn): The music distribution method according to claim 39, wherein said information concerning settings and conditions includes an Internet IP address required when said music reproduction apparatus reports said number of times of reproduction of said music information and said number of times of reproduction of said advertisement information to said server.

Claim 41 (Withdrawn): The music distribution method according to claim 37, wherein said music reproduction apparatus transmits said number of times of reproduction of said music information and said number of times of reproduction of said advertisement information at a given frequency.

Claim 42 (Withdrawn): The music distribution method according to claim 37, wherein said advertisement information has a plurality of sets of information corresponding to each output mode in such a manner that said music reproduction apparatus can select at least any one of a banner advertisement, a character output and an audio output in accordance with its output mode.

Claim 43 (Withdrawn): The music distribution method according to claim 37, wherein said advertisement information is reproduced during reproduction of said music information.

Claim 44 (Withdrawn): The music distribution method according to claim 37, wherein said advertisement information is reproduced before or after reproduction of said music information.

Claim 45 (Withdrawn): A music reproduction apparatus which reproduces music information distributed from a server, comprising:

means for requesting said server through a communication medium to distribute said music information;

means for receiving from said server through said communication medium a distribution file in which said music information requested to be distributed and information concerning settings and conditions required for transmitting information from said music reproduction apparatus to said server are integrated;

means for reproducing said music information in said distribution file;

means for recording a number of times of reproduction of said music information reproduced; and

means for transmitting said number of times of reproduction of said music information to said server through said communication medium.

Claim 46 (Withdrawn): A server which distributes music information to a music reproduction apparatus, comprising:

means for receiving a request of distribution of said music information from said music reproduction apparatus through a communication medium;

means for generating a distribution file in which said music information requested to be distributed, advertisement information and information concerning settings and conditions

required for transmitting information from said music reproduction apparatus to said server are integrated;

means for distributing said distribution file to said music reproduction apparatus through said communication medium; and

means for receiving through said communication medium a number of times of reproduction of said music information and a number of times of reproduction of said advertisement information reproduced by said music reproduction apparatus.

Claim 47 (Previously Presented): The music reproduction method according to claim 1, wherein said music information distributed to said music reproduction apparatus is stored in a nonvolatile semiconductor memory in said music reproduction apparatus.

Claim 48 (Previously Presented): The music reproduction method according to claim 47, wherein said nonvolatile semiconductor memory includes a flash memory.

Claim 49 (Previously Presented): The music distribution method according to claim 1, wherein said distribution file has a header information portion and a main body information portion arranged under said header information portion, and a structure in which said information concerning settings and conditions are recorded in said header information portion, and said music information is recorded in said main body information portion.

Claim 50 (Previously Presented): The music distribution method according to claim 1, wherein said distribution file has a header information portion and a main body information portion arranged under said header information portion, and a structure in which said music information is recorded in said main body information portion, and said

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information concerning settings and conditions and advertisement information are included in said music information.